

Act I.

THE MINOR.



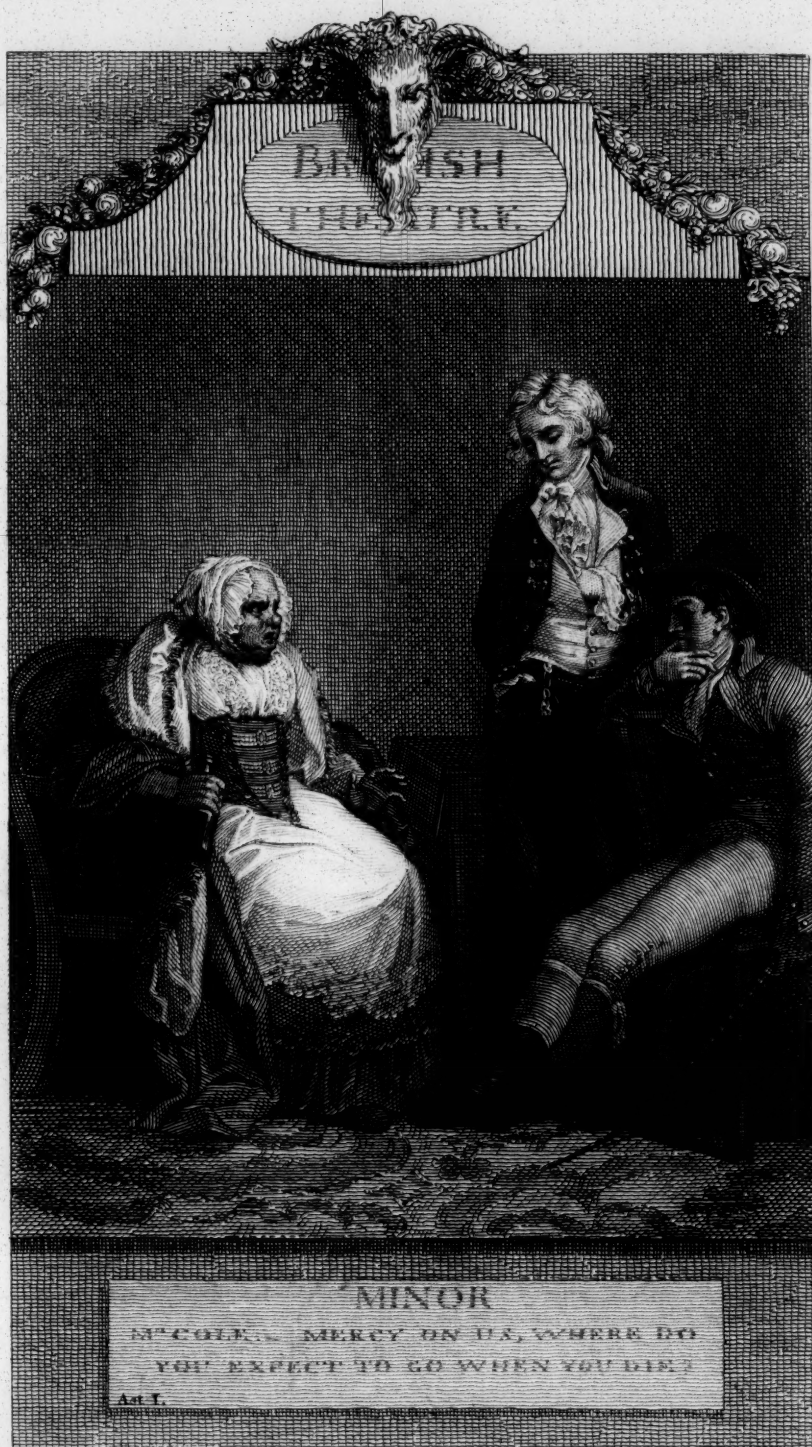
De Wilde pinx.

Leney sculp.

M^r. ANGELO & M^{rs}. COLE.

*All shall have their call, as M^r. Quantum says,
sooner or later.*

London Printed for J. Bell British Library, Strand, Sept 29. 1792.



Smirke pinx.

Lacey sculp.

London Printed for J. Bell, British Library, Strand. Sept^r 23. 1792.

7 JUL 52

THE MINOR.

A
COMEDY.

BY SAMUEL FOOTE, ESQ.

ADAPTED FOR
THEATRICAL REPRESENTATION,
AS PERFORMED AT THE
THEATRES-ROYAL, DRURY-LANE AND COVENT-GARDEN.

REGULATED FROM THE PROMPT-BOOKS,

By Permission of the Managers.

"The Lines distinguished by inverted Commas, are omitted in the Representation."

LONDON:

Printed for the Proprietors, under the Direction of JOHN BELL,
British Library, STRAND,
Bookseller to His Royal Highness the Prince of Wales.

M DCC XCII.



TO HIS GRACE
WILLIAM
DUKE OF DEVONSHIRE.

Lord Chamberlain of His Majesty's Household.

MY LORD,

THE MINOR, who is indebted for his appearance on the Stage to your Grace's indulgence, begs leave to desire your further protection, at his entering into the world.

Though the allegiance due from the whole dramatic people to your Grace's station, might place this address in the light of a natural tribute ; yet, my Lord I should not have taken that liberty with the Duke of Devonshire, if I could not at the same time, plead some little utility in the design of my piece ; and add, that the public approbation has stamped a value on the execution.

The law, which threw the Stage under the absolute government of a Lord Chamberlain, could not fail to fill the minds of all the objects of that power with very gloomy apprehensions : they found themselves (through their own licentiousness, it must be confessed) in a more precarious dependent state, than any other of His Majesty's subjects. But when their direction was lodged in the hands of a nobleman, whose ancestors had so successfully struggled for national liberty, they ceased to fear for their own. It was not from a patron of the liberal arts they were to expect an oppressor ; it was not from the friend of freedom, and of man, they were to dread partial monopolies, or the establishment of petty tyrannies.

Their warmest wishes are accomplished ; none of their rights have been invaded, except what, without the first

poetic authority, I should not venture to call a right, the Jus Nocendi.

Your tenderness, my Lord, for all the followers of the Muses, has been in no instance more conspicuous, than in your late favour to me, the meanest of their train; your Grace has thrown open (for those who are denied admittance into the Palaces of Parnassus) a cottage on its borders, where the unhappy migrants may be, if not magnificently, at least, hospitably entertained.

I shall detain your Grace no longer, than just to echo the public voice, that, for the honour, progress, and perfection of letters, your Grace may long continue their candid CENSOR, who have always been their generous protector.

I have the honour, my Lord, to be, with the greatest respect, and gratitude,

Your Grace's most dutiful,

Most obliged,

And obedient Servant,

*Ellestre,
July 8, 1760.*

SAMUEL FOOTE.

THE MINOR.

THE Dramas of this Writer, having been founded upon the floating incidents and the characters of his own time, have no other claims upon posterity than what their keenness of wit and fertility of humour may give. Few of them are like SHAKSPERE'S Representations of General Nature. The characters are not those of the Class, but the Individual, and when the original is snatched from our recollection, the copy is thereby abated of its principal power to please. They therefore depend more upon mimicry than just conception, and his personages will continue to be traditionally played in the manner that FOOTE, their creator, performed them.

This bar to his perpetuity of Fame affects the present Play less than most of his Collection. The Minor can be scarcely out of vogue while we have a BAWD in the Stews, an AUCTIONEER in the Rostrum, or a METHODIST in the Pulpit.

It may be desirable to transmit, that the Characters sketched under the appellations of *Mother Cole*, *Smirk*, and *Shift*, were very just imitations of the well-known Mother DOUGLAS, Mr. LANGFORD the Auctioneer, and GEORGE WHITFIELD the Enthusiast.

The present Play was happily conducive to opening the eyes of Men upon the pernicious principles of the wretched Devotees of the Tabernacle. It is at all times dangerous to attack any mode of piety, but true devotion suffered little, it is believed, on the present occasion.

Dramatis Personæ.

DRURY-LANE.

PERSONS IN THE INTRODUCTION.

FOOTE,	-	-	-	-	-	_____
CANKER,	-	-	-	-	-	_____
SMART,	-	-	-	-	-	_____
PEARSE,	-	-	-	-	-	_____

IN THE COMEDY.

						<i>Men.</i>
SIR WILLIAM WEALTHY,	-	-	-	-	-	- Mr. Baddeley.
MR. RICHARD WEALTHY,	-	-	-	-	-	- Mr. Packer.
SIR GEORGE WEALTHY,	-	-	-	-	-	- Mr. Whitfield.
SHIFT,	-	-	-	-	-	- Mr. Bannister, jun.
LOADER,	-	-	-	-	-	- Mr. R. Palmer.
DICK,	:	-	-	-	-	- Mr. Burton.
TRANSFER,	-	-	-	-	-	- _____
SMIRK,	-	-	-	-	-	- Mr. Bannister, jun.

						<i>Women.</i>
MRS. COLE,	-	-	-	-	-	- Mr. Bannister.
LUCY,	-	-	-	-	-	- Miss Collins.

COVENT-GARDEN.

						<i>Men.</i>
SIR WILLIAM WEALTHY,	-	-	-	-	-	- Mr. Wewitzer.
MR. RICHARD WEALTHY,	-	-	-	-	-	- Mr. Usher.
SIR GEORGE WEALTHY,	-	-	-	-	-	- Mr. Hiff.
SHIFT,	-	-	-	-	-	- Mr. Bannister, jun.
LOADER,	-	-	-	-	-	- Mr. R. Palmer.
DICK,	-	-	-	-	-	- Mr. Burton.
TRANSFER,	-	-	-	-	-	- _____
SMIRK,	-	-	-	-	-	- Mr. Bannister, jun.

						<i>Women.</i>
MRS. COLE,	-	-	-	-	-	- Mr. Bannister.
LUCY,	-	-	-	-	-	- Miss Heard.



THE MINOR.

INTRODUCTION.

Enter CANKER and SMART.

Smart.

BUT are you sure he has leave?

Cank. Certain.

Smart. I'm damn'd glad on't. For now we shall have a laugh either with him, or at him, it does not signify which.

Cank. Not a farthing.

Smart. D'you know his scheme?

Cank. Not I.—But is not the door of the Little Theatre open?

Smart. Yes.—Who is that fellow that seems to stand centry there? 10

Cank. By his tattered garb, and meagre visage, he must be one of the troop.

Smart. I'll call him.—Halloo, Mr.—

Enter PEARSE.

What, is there any thing going on over the way?

Pearse. A rehearsal.

Smart. Of what?

Pearse. A new piece.

Smart. Foote's?

Pearse. Yes.

Cank. Is he there?

25

Pearse. He is.

Smart. Zounds, let us go and see what he is about.

Cank. With all my heart.

Smart. Come along then.

[*Exeunt.*]

Enter FOOTE, and an Actor.

Foote. Sir, this will never do; you must get rid of your high notes, and country cant. Oh, 'tis the true strolling.—

Enter SMART and CANKER.

Smart. Ha, ha, ha! what, hard at it, my boy!—Here's your old friend Canker and I come for a peep. Well, and hey, what is your plan?

30

Foote. Plan!

Smart. Ay, what are your characters? Give us your groupe; how is your cloth filled?

Foote. Characters!

Smart. Ay.—Come, come, communicate. What, man, we will lend thee a lift. I have a damned fine original for thee, an aunt of my own, just come from the North, with the true Newcastle bur in her throat; and a nose and a chin.—I am afraid she is not well enough known: but I have a remedy for that. I'll bring her the first night of your piece, place her in a conspicuous station, and whisper the secret to the whole house. That will be damned fine, won't it?

Foote. Oh, delicious!

43

Smart. But don't name me.—For if she smokes me for the author, I shall be dashed out of her codicil in a hurry.

Foote. Oh, never fear me. But I should think your uncle Tom a better character.

Smart. What, the politician? 48

Foot. Aye; that every day, after dinner, as soon as the cloth is removed, fights the battle of Minden, batters the French with cherry-stones, and pursues them to the banks of the Rhine, in a stream of spilt port.

Smart. Oh, damn it; he'll do.

Foot. Or what say you to your father-in-law, Sir Timothy? who, though as broken-winded as a Hounslow post-horse, is eternally chaunting Venetian ballads. *Kata tore cara biglia.*

Smart. Admirable! by Heavens!—Have you got 'em?

Foot. No.

Smart. Then in with 'em, my boy. 60

Foot. Not one.

Smart. Pr'ythee why not?

Foot. Why, look'e, *Smart*, though you are, in the language of the world, my friend, yet there is one thing you, I am sure, love better than any body.

Smart. What's that?

Foot. Mischief.

Smart. No, pr'ythee——

Foot. How now am I sure that you, who so readily give up your relations, may not have some design upon me?

Smart. I don't understand you. 71

Foot. Why, as soon as my characters begin to circulate a little successfully, my mouth is stopped in a minute by the clamour of your relations.—Oh, damme—'tis a shame—it should not be—people of distinction brought upon the stage.—And so, out of compliment to your cousins, I am to be beggared for treating the public with the follies of your family, at your own request.

Smart. How can you think I would be such a dog? What

the devil, then, are we to have nothing personal? Give us the actors, however. 81

Foot. Oh, that's stale. Besides, I think they have, of all men, the best right to complain.

Smart. How so?

Foot. Because, by rendering them ridiculous in their profession, you, at the same time, injure their pockets.—— Now, as to the other gentry, they have providentially something besides their understanding to rely upon; and the only injury they can receive is—that the whole town is then diverted with what, before, was only the amusement of private parties. 91

Cank. Give us then a national portrait: a Scotchman or an Irishman.

Foot. If you mean merely the dialect of the two countries, I can't think it either a subject of satire or humour; it is an accidental unhappiness, for which a man is no more accountable than the colour of his hair. Now, affectation I take to be the true comic object. If, indeed, a North Briton, struck with a scheme of reformation, should advance from the banks of the Tweed to teach the English the true pronunciation of their own language, he would, I think, merit your laughter: nor would a Dublin mechanic, who, from heading the Liberty-boys in a skirmish on Ormond Quay, should think he had a right to prescribe military laws to the first commander in Europe, be a less ridiculous object.

Smart. Are there such? 106

Foot. If you mean that the blunders of a few peasants, or the partial principles of a single scoundrel, are to stand as characteristic marks of a whole country; your pride may produce a laugh, but, believe me, 'tis at the expence of your understanding.

Cank. Heyday, what a system is here! Laws for laugh-

ing!—And pray, sage sir, instruct us when we may laugh with propriety. 114

Foot. At an old beau, a superannuated beauty, a military coward, a stuttering orator, or a gouty dancer. In short, whoever affects to be what he is not, or strives to be what he cannot, is an object worthy of the poet's pen, and your mirth.

Smart. Psha, I don't know what you mean by your is nots and cannots—damned abstruse jargon.—Ha, Canker!

Cank. Well, but if you will not give us persons, let us have things. Treat us with a modern amour, and a state intrigue, or a—— 123

Foot. And so amuse the public ear at the expence of private peace. You must excuse me.

Cank. And with these principles you expect to thrive on this spot?

Smart. No, no, it won't do. I tell thee the plain roast and boiled of the theatres will never do at this table. We must have high-seasoned *ragoûts*, and rich sauces.

Foot. Why, perhaps, by way of dessert, I may produce something that may hit your palate. 132

Smart. Your bill of fare?

Foot. What think you of one of those itinerant field-orators, who, though at declared enmity with common sense, have the address to poison the principles, and, at the same time, pick the pockets of half our industrious fellow subjects?

Cank. Have a care. Dangerous ground. *Ludere cum sacris*, you know. 140

Foot. Now I look upon it in a different manner. I consider these gentlemen in the light of public performers, like myself; and whether we exhibit at Tottenham-Court or the Hay-Market, our purpose is the same, and the place is immaterial.

Cank. Why, indeed, if it be considered——

Foot. Nay, more, I must beg leave to assert, that ridicule is the only antidote against this pernicious poison. This is a madness that argument can never cure : and should a little wholesome severity be applied, persecution would be the immediate cry : where then can we have recourse but to the comic muse ? Perhaps, the archness and severity of her smile may redress an evil that the laws cannot reach, or reason reclaim.

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Cank. Why, if it does not cure those already distempered, it may be a means to stop the infection.

Smart. But how is your scheme conducted ?

Foot. Of that you may judge. We are just going upon a repetition of the piece.—I should be glad to have your opinion.

160

Smart. We will give it you.

Foot. One indulgence : as you are Englishmen, I think, I need not beg that, as from necessity most of my performers are new, you will allow for their inexperience, and encourage their timidity.

Smart. But reasonable.

Foot. Come then, prompter, begin.

Pearse. Lord, sir, we are all at a stand.

Foot. What's the matter ?

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Pearse. Mrs. O'Schohnesy has returned the part of the bawd ; she says she is a gentlewoman, and it would be a reflection on her family to do any such thing !

Foot. Indeed !

Pearse. If it had been only a whore, says she, I should not have minded it ; because no lady need be ashamed of doing that.

Foot. Well, there is no help for it ; but these gentlemen must not be disappointed. Well, I'll do the character myself.

[*Exeunt.*]

ACT I. SCENE I.

Enter Sir WILLIAM WEALTHY, and Mr. RICHARD WEALTHY.

Sir William.

COME, come, brother, I know the world. People who have their attention eternally fixed upon one object, can't help being a little narrow in their notions.

R. Weal. A sagacious remark that, and highly probable, that we merchants, who maintain a constant correspondence with the four quarters of the world, should know less of it than your fashionable fellows, whose whole experience is bounded by Westminster-bridge.

Sir Will. Nay, brother, as a proof that I am not blind to the benefit of travelling, George, you know, has been in Germany these four years. 11

R. Weal. Where he is well-grounded in gaming and gluttony; France has furnished him with fawning and flattery; Italy equipp'd him with capriols and cantatas: and thus accomplished, my young gentleman is returned with a cargo of whores, cooks, valets de chambre, and fiddlesticks, a most valuable member of the British commonwealth.

Sir Will. You dislike then my system of education?

R. Weal. Most sincerely.

Sir Will. The whole? 20

R. Weal. Every particular.

Sir Will. The early part, I should imagine, might merit your approbation.

R. Weal. Least of all. What, I suppose, because he has run the gauntlet through a public school, where, at sixteen, he had practised more vices, than he would otherwise have heard of at sixty.

Sir Will. Ha, ha, prejudice ! 28

R. Weal. Then, indeed, you removed him to the University ; where, lest his morals should be mended, and his understanding improved, you fairly set him free from the restraint of the one, and the drudgery of the other, by the privileged distinction of a silk gown and a velvet cap.

Sir Will. And all these evils, you think, a city education would have prevented ?

R. Weal. Doubtless.—Proverbs, proverbs, brother William, convey wholesome instruction. Idleness is the root of all evil. Regular hours, constant employment, and good example, can't fail to form the mind. 39

Sir Will. Why truly, brother, had you stuck to your old civic vices, hypocrisy, cozenage, and avarice, I don't know whether I might not have committed George to your care ; but you cockneys now beat us suburbians at our own weapons. What, old boy, times are changed since the date of thy indentures ; when the sleek, crop-eared 'prentice used to dangle after his mistress, with the great bible under his arm, to St. Bride's on a Sunday ; bring home the text, repeat the divisions of the discourse, dine at twelve, and regale upon a gaudy day with buns and beer at Islington, or Mile End.

R. Weal. Wonderfully facetious ! 50

Sir Will. Our modern lads are of a different metal. They have their gaming clubs in the Garden, their little lodgings, the snug depositories of their rusty swords, and occasional bag-wigs ; their horses for the turf ; ay, and their commissions of bankruptcy too, before they are well out of their time.

R. Weal. Infamous aspersion !

Sir Will. But the last meeting at Newmarket, Lord Lofty received at the hazard-table the identical note from the individual taylor to whom he had paid it but the day before, for a new set of liveries. 61

R. Weal. Invention !

Sir Will. These are anecdotes you will never meet with in your weekly travels from Cateaton-street to your boarded box in Clapham, brother.

R. Weal. And yet that boarded box, as your prodigal spendthrift proceeds, will soon be the only seat of the family.

Sir Will. May be not. Who knows what a reformation our project may produce !

R. Weal. I do. None at all. 70

Sir Will. Why so ?

R. Weal. Because your means are ill-proportioned to their end. Were he my son, I would serve him—

Sir Will. As you have done your daughter—Discard him. But consider, I have but one.

R. Weal. That would weigh nothing with me ; for, was Charlotte to set up a will of her own, and reject the man of my choice, she must expect to share the fate of her sister. I consider families as a smaller kind of kingdoms, and would have disobedience in the one as severely punished as rebellion in the other. Both cut off from their respective societies.

Sir Will. Poor Lucy ! But surely you begin to relent. Mayn't I intercede. 83

R. Weal. Look'e, brother, you know my mind. I will be absolute. If I meddle with the management of your son, it is at your own request ; but if directly or indirectly you interfere with my banishment of that wilful, headstrong, disobedient hussy, all ties between us are broke ; and I shall no more remember you as a brother, than I do her as a child.

Sir Will. I have done. But to return. You think there is a probability in my plan? 91

R. Weal. I shall attend the issue.

Sir Will. You will lend your aid however.

R. Weal. We shall see how you go on.

Enter Servant.

Serv. A letter, sir.

Sir Will. Oh, from Capias, my attorney. Who brought it?

Serv. The person is without, sir.

Sir Will. Bid him wait. [*Reads.*] [*Exit Servant.*]

‘ WORTHY SIR, 99

‘ The bearer is the person I promised to procure. I thought it was proper for you to examine him in *viva voce*. So if you administer a few interrogatories, you will find, by cross-questioning him, whether he is a competent person to prosecute the cause you wot of. I wish you a speedy issue: and as there can be no default in your judgment, am of opinion it should be carried into immediate execution. I am,

Worthy Sir, &c.

‘ TIMOTHY CAPIAS.

‘ P. S. The party’s name is Samuel Shift. He is an admirable mime, or mimic, and most delectable company; as we experience every Tuesday night at our club, the Magpye and Horse-shoe, Fetter-lane.’ 112

Very methodical indeed, Mr. Capias!—John——

Enter Servant.

Bid the person who brought this letter walk in. [*Exit Servant.*]
Have you any curiosity, brother?

R. Weal. Not a jot. I must to the Change. In the even-

ing you may find me in the counting-house, or at Jonathan's. [Exit R. Wealthy.

Sir Will. You shall hear from me.

Enter SHIFT and Servant.

Shut the door, John, and remember, I am not at home.

[Exit Serv.] You came from Mr. Capias?

121

Shift. I did, sir.

Sir Will. Your name, I think, is Shift?

Shift. It is, sir.

Sir Will. Did Mr. Capias drop any hint of my business with you?

Shift. None. He only said, with his spectacles on his nose, and his hand upon his chin, Sir William Wealthy is a respectable personage, and my client; he wants to retain you in a certain affair, and will open the case, and give you your brief himself: if you adhere to his instructions, and carry your cause, he is generous, and will discharge your bill without taxation.

133

Sir Will. Ha, ha! my friend Capias to a hair! Well, sir, this is no bad specimen of your abilities. But see that the door is fast. Now, sir, you are to——

Shift. A moment's pause, if you please. You must know, Sir William, I am a prodigious admirer of forms. Now Mr. Capias tells me, that it is always the rule to administer a retaining fee before you enter upon the merits.

140

Sir Will. Oh, sir, I beg your pardon!

Shift. Not that I question your generosity; but forms you know——

Sir Will. No apology, I beg. But as we are to have a closer connection, it may not be amiss, by way of introduction, to understand one another a little. Pray, sir, where was you born?

Shift. At my father's.

Sir Will. Hum!—And what was he?

Shift. A gentleman.

150

Sir Will. What was you bred?

Shift. A gentleman.

Sir Will. How do you live?

Shift. Like a gentleman.

Sir Will. Could nothing induce you to unbosom yourself?

Shift. Look'e, Sir William, there is a kind of something in your countenance, a certain openness and generosity, a *je ne sçai quoi* in your manner, that I will unlock: you shall see me all.

Sir Will. You will oblige me.

160

Shift. You must know then, that Fortune, which frequently delights to raise the noblest structures from the simplest foundations; who, from a taylor made a pope, from a gin-shop an empress, and many a prime minister from nothing at all, has thought fit to raise me to my present height, from the humble employment of Light your Honour—a link boy.

Sir Will. A pleasant fellow.—Who were your parents?

Shift. I was produced, sir, by a left-handed marriage, in the language of the news-papers, between an illustrious lamp-lighter and an eminent itinerant cat and dog butcher.—Cat's meat, and dog's meat.—I dare say you have heard my mother, sir. But as to this happy pair I owe little besides my being, I shall drop them where they dropt me—in the street.

175

Sir Will. Proceed.

Shift. My first knowledge of the world I owe to a school, which has produced many a great man—the avenues of the play-house. There, sir, leaning on my extinguished link, I learned dexterity from pick-pockets, connivance from con-

stables, politics and fashion from footmen, and the art of making and breaking a promise from their masters. Here, sirrah, light me across the kennel.—I hope your honour will remember poor Jack.—You ragged rascal, I have no halfpence—I'll pay you the next time I see you—But, lack-a-day, sir, that time I saw as seldom as his tradesmen.

Sir Will. Very well.

Shift. To these accomplishments from without the theatre, I must add one that I obtained within.

Sir Will. How did you gain admittance there? 190

Shift. My merit, sir, that, like my link, threw a radiance round me.—A detachment from the head quarters here, took possession, in the summer, of a country corporation, where I did the honours of the barn, by sweeping the stage, and clipping the candles. There my skill and address was so conspicuous, that it procured me the same office the ensuing winter, at Drury-Lane, where I acquired intrepidity; the crown of all my virtues.

Sir Will. How did you obtain that? 199

Shift. By my post. For I think, sir, he that dares stand the shot of the gallery in lighting, snuffing, and sweeping, the first night of a new play, may bid defiance to the pillory, with all its customary compliments.

Sir Will. Some truth in that.

Shift. But an unlucky crab-apple, apply'd to my right eye, by a patriotic gingerbread-baker from the Borough, who would not suffer three dancers from Switzerland, because he hated the French, forced me to a precipitate retreat.

Sir Will. Poor devil! 209

Shift. Broglio and Contades have done the same. But, as it happened, like a tennis-ball, I rose higher than the rebound.

Sir Will. How so?

Shift. My misfortune, sir, moved the compassion of one

of our performers, a whimsical man, he took me into his service. To him I owe, what I believe, will make me useful to you.

Sir Will. Explain.

217

Shift. Why, sir, my master was remarkably happy in an art, which, however disesteemed at present, is, by Tully, reckoned amongst the perfections of an orator; mimicry.

Sir Will. Why, you are deeply read, Mr. Shift!

Shift. A smattering.—But as I was saying, sir, nothing came amiss to my master. Bipeds, or quadrupeds; rationals, or animals; from the clamour of the bar, to the cackle of the barn-door; from the soporific twang of the tabernacle of Tottenham-Court, to the melodious bray of their long-eared brethren in Bunhill-Fields; all were objects of his imitation, and my attention. In a word, sir, for two whole years, under this professor, I studied and starved, impoverished my body, and pampered my mind; till thinking myself pretty nearly equal to my master, I made him one of his own bows, and set up for myself.

232

Sir Will. You have been successful, I hope.

Shift. Pretty well, I can't complain. My art, sir, is a *pass-par-tout*. I seldom want employment. Let's see how stand my engagements. [*Pulls out a pocket-book.*] Hum—hum. Oh! Wednesday at Mrs. Gamut's near Hanover-square; there, there, I shall make a meal upon the Mingotti; for her ladyship is in the opera interest; but, however, I shall revenge her cause upon her rival Mattei. Sunday evening at Lady Sustituto's concert. Thursday I dine upon the actors, with ten Templars, at the Mitre in Fleet-street. Friday I am to give the amorous parly of two intriguing cats in a gutter, with the disturbing of a hen-roost, at Mr. Deputy Sugarsop's, near the Monument. So, sir, you see my hands are full. In short, Sir William, there is not a buck or a

turtle devoured within the bills of mortality, but there I may, if I please, stick a napkin under my chin.

Sir Will. I'm afraid, Mr. Shift, I must break in a little upon your engagements: but you shall not be a loser by the bargain. 251

Shift. Command me.

Sir Will. You can be secret as well as serviceable?

Shift. Mute as a mackrel.

Sir Will. Come hither then. If you betray me to my son——

Shift. Scalp me.

Sir Will. Enough.—You must know then, the hopes of our family are, Mr. Shift, centered in one boy.]

Shift. And I warrant he is a hopeful one. 260

Sir Will. No interruption, I beg. George has been abroad these four years, and, from his late behaviour, I have reason to believe, that, had a certain event happened, which I am afraid he wished——my death——

Shift. Yes; that's natural enough.

Sir Will. Nay, pray——there would soon be an end to an ancient and honourable family.

Shift. Very melancholy indeed. But families, like besoms, will wear to the stumps, and finally fret out, as you say. 270

Sir Will. Pr'ythee, peace for five minutes.

Shift. I am tongue-ty'd.

Sir Will. Now I have projected a scheme to prevent this calamity.

Shift. Ay, I should be glad to hear that.

Sir Will. I am going to tell it you.

Shift. Proceed.

Sir Will. George, as I have contrived it, shall experience all the misery of real ruin, without running the least risque.

Shift. Ay, that will be a *coup de maitre*.

280

Sir Will. I have prevailed upon his uncle, a wealthy citizen——

Shift. I don't like a city plot.

Sir Will. I tell thee it is my own.

Shift. I beg pardon.

Sir Will. My brother, I say, some time since, wrote him a circumstantial account of my death; upon which he is returned, in full expectation of succeeding to my estate.

Shift. Immediately.

Sir Will. No; when at age. In about three months.

Shift. I understand you.

291

Sir Will. Now, sir, guessing into what hands my heedless boy would naturally fall, on his return, I have, in a feigned character, associated myself with a set of rascals, who will spread every bait that can flatter folly, inflame extravagance, allure inexperience, or catch credulity. And when, by their means, he thinks himself reduced to the last extremity; lost even to the most distant hope——

Shift. What then?

299

Sir Will. Then I will step in like his guardian-angel, and snatch him from perdition. If, mortified by misery, he becomes conscious of his errors, I have saved my son; but if, on the other hand, gratitude can't bind, nor ruin reclaim him, I will cast him out, as an alien to my blood, and trust for the support of my name and family to a remoter branch.

Shift. Bravely resolved. But what part am I to sustain in this drama?

Sir Will. Why George, you are to know, is already stript of what money he could command, by two sharpers: but as I never trust them out of my sight, they can't deceive me.

Shift. Out of your sight!

311

Sir Will. Why, I tell thee, I am one of the knot; an

adept in the science; can slip, shuffle, cog, or cut with the best of them.

Shift. How do you escape your son's notice?

Sir Will. His firm persuasion of my death, with the extravagance of my disguise.—Why, I would engage to elude your penetration, when I am beau'd out for the baron.—But of that by and by. He has recourse, after his ill success, to the *cent. per cent.* gentry, the usurers, for a further supply.

321

Shift. Natural enough.

Sir Will. Pray, do you know—I forgot his name—a wrinkled old fellow, in a thread-bare coat? He sits every morning, from twelve till two, in the left corner of Lloyd's coffee-house; and every evening, from five till eight, under the clock at the Temple-Exchange.

Shift. What, little Transfer the broker?

Sir Will. The same. Do you know him?

329

Shift. Know him! Ay, rot him. It was but last Easter Tuesday he had me turned out at a feast, in Leather-seller's Hall, for singing 'Room for Cuckolds,' like a parrot; and vowed it meant a reflection upon the whole body corporate.

Sir Will. You have reason to remember him.

Shift. Yes, yes, I recommended a minor to him myself, for the loan only of fifty pounds; and, would you believe it, as I hope to be saved, we dined, supped, and wetted five-and-thirty guineas upon tick, in meetings at the Cross-keys, in order to settle the terms; and, after all, the scoundrel would not lend us a stiver.

340

Sir Will. Could you personate him?

Shift. Hum! Oh, you shall see me shift into his shamble in a minute; and, with a withered face, a bit of a purple nose, a cautionary stammer, and a sleek silver head, I would undertake to deceive even his banker. But, to speak the

truth, I have a friend that can do this inimitably well. Have not you something of more consequence for me?

Sir Will. I have. Could not you, master Shift, assume another shape? You have attended auctions. 349

Shift. Auctions! a constant puff. Deep in the mystery; a professed connoisseur, from a niger to a nautilus, from the Apollo Belvidere to a butterfly.

Sir Will. One of these insinuating, oily orators I will get you to personate: for we must have the plate and jewels in our possession, or they will soon fall into other hands.

Shift. I will do it.

Sir Will. Within I'll give you farther instructions.

Shift. I'll follow you.

Sir Will. [*Going returns.*] You will want materials. 359

Shift. Oh, my dress I can be furnished with in five minutes. [*Exit Sir Will.*] A whimsical old blade this. I shall laugh if this scheme miscarries. I have a strange mind to lend it a lift—never had a greater—Pho, a damn'd unnatural connection this of mine! What have I to do with fathers and guardians! a parcel of preaching, prudent, careful, curmudgeonly—Dead to pleasures themselves, and the blasters of it in others—Mere dogs in a manger—No, no, I'll veer, tack about, open my budget to the boy, and join in a counter-plot.—But hold, hold, friend Stephen, see first how the land lies. Who knows whether this Germanized genius has parts to comprehend, or spirit to reward thy merit. There's danger in that, ay, marry is there. 'Egad, before I shift the helm, I'll first examine the coast; and then, if there be but a bold shore and a good bottom, have a care, old Square-toes, you will meet with your match. [*Exit.*

Enter Sir GEORGE, LOADER, and Servant.

Sir Geo. Let the Martin pannels for the vis-a-vis be carried to Long-Acre, and the pye-balls sent to Halls to be bitted—You will give me leave to be in your debt till the evening, Mr. Loader. I have just enough left to discharge the baron; and we must, you know, be punctual with him, for the credit of the country. 382

Load. Fire him, a snub-nosed son of a bitch. Levant me, but he got enough last night to purchase a principality amongst his countrymen, the High-dutchians and Hussarians.

Sir Geo. You had your share, Mr. Loader.

Load. Who, I? Lurch me at four, but I was mark'd to the top of your trick by the baron, my dear. What, I am no cinque and quarter man. Come, shall we have a dip in the history of the Four Kings this morning? 391

Sir Geo. Rather too early. Besides, it is the rule abroad, never to engage a-fresh till our old scores are discharged.

Load. Capot me, but those lads abroad are pretty fellows, let them say what they will. Here, sir, they will vowel you, from father to son, to the twentieth generation. They would as soon now-a-days, pay a tradesman's bill as a play debt. All sense of honour is gone, not a stiver stirring. They could as soon raise the dead as two pounds two; nick me, but I've a great mind to tie up, and ruin the rascals—What, has Transfer been here this morning? 401

Enter DICK.

Sir Geo. Any body here this morning, Dick?

Dick. No body, your honour.

Load. Repique the rascal. He promised to be here before me.

Dick. I beg your honour's pardon. Mrs. Cole from the Piazza was here, between seven and eight.

Sir Geo. An early hour for a lady of her calling.

Dick. Mercy on me! the poor gentlewoman is mortally altered since we used to lodge there, in our jaunts from Oxford; wrapt up in flannels; all over the rheumatise. 411

Load. Ay, ay, old Moll is at her last stake.

Dick. She bade me say, she just stopt in her way to the tabernacle; after the exhortation, she says, she'll call again.

Sir Geo. Exhortation! Oh, I recollect. Well, whilst they only make proselytes from that profession, they are heartily welcome to them. She does not mean to make me a convert?

Dick. I believe she has some such design upon me; for she offered me a book of hymns, a shilling, and a dram, to go along with her. 421

Sir Geo. No bad scheme, Dick. Thou hast a fine, sober, psalm-singing countenance; and when thou hast been some time in their trammels, may'st make as able a teacher as the best of 'em.

Dick. Laud, sir, I want learning.

Sir Geo. Oh, the spirit, the spirit, will supply all that, Dick, never fear.

Enter Sir WILLIAM as a German baron.

My dear baron, what news from the Hay-market? What says the Florenza? Does she yield? Shall I be happy? Say yes, and command my fortune. 431

Sir Will. I was never did see so fine a woman since I was leave Hamburgh; dere was all de colour, all red and white, dat was quite natural; point d'artifice. Then she was dance and sing—I vow to heaven, I was never see de like!

Sir Geo. But how did she receive my embassy? What hopes? 437

Sir Will. Why dere was monsieur le chevalier, when I first enter, dree or four damn'd queer people! Ah, ah, dought I, by gad I guess your business. Dere was one fat big wo-mans, dat I know long time: le valet de chambre was tell me dat she came from a grand merchand; ha, ha, dought I, by your leave, stick to your shop; or, if you must have de pritty girl, dere is de play-hous, dat do very well for you; but for de opera, pardonnez, by gar dat is meat for your master.

Sir Geo. Insolent mechanic!—but she despised him?

Sir Will. Ah, *ma foy*, he is damn'd rich, has *beaucoup* de guineas; but, after de fat woman was go, I was tell the signora, madam, der is one certain chevalier of dis country, who has travelled, see de world, *bien fait*, well made, *beaucoup d'esprit*, a great deal of monies, who beg, by gar, to have de honour to drow himself at your feet. 453

Sir Geo. Well, well, baron.

Sir Will. She aska your name: as soon as I tell her, aha, by gar, *dans* an instant, she melt like de lomp of sugar: she run to her bureau, and, in de minute, return wid de paper.

Sir Geo. Give it me. [Reads.]

Les preliminaries d'une traite entre le Chevalier Wealthy, & la Signor Diamanti.

A bagatelle, a trifle: she shall have it. 461

Load. Hark'e, knight, what is all that there outlandish stuff?

Sir Geo. Read, read! the eloquence of angels, my dear baron!

Load. Slam me, but the man's mad! I don't understand their gibberish—What is it in English?

Sir Geo. The preliminaries of a subsidy treaty, between Sir George Wealthy and Signora Florenza. That the said signora will resign the possession of her person to the said Sir George, on the payment of three hundred guineas monthly, for equipage, table, domestics, dress, dogs, and diamonds; her debts to be duly discharged, and a note advanced of five hundred by way of entrance. 474

Load. Zounds, what a cormorant! She must be devilish handsome.

Sir Geo. I am told so.

Load. Told so! Why, did you never see her?

Sir Geo. No; and possibly never may but from my box at the opera.

Load. Hey-day! Why, what the devil—— 481

Sir Geo. Ha, ha, you stare, I don't wonder at it. This is an elegant refinement, unknown to the gross voluptuaries of this part of the world. This is, Mr. Loader, what may be called a debt to your dignity; for an opera-girl is as essential a piece of equipage for a man of fashion as his coach.

Load. The devil!

Sir Geo. 'Tis for the vulgar only to enjoy what they possess: the distinction of ranks and conditions are, to have hounds, and never hunt; cooks, and dine at taverns; houses, you never inhabit; mistresses, you never enjoy— 491

Load. And debts, you never pay. 'Egad, I am not surprised at it; if this be your trade, no wonder that you want money for necessities, when you give such a damned deal for nothing at all.

Enter Servant.

Serv. Mrs. Cole, to wait upon your honour.

Sir Geo. My dear baron, run, dispatch my affair, conclude my treaty, and thank her for the very reasonable conditions.

Sir Will. I sall.

Sir Geo. Mr. Loader, shall I trouble you to introduce the lady? She is, I think, your acquaintance. 501

Load. Who, old Moll? Ay, ay, she's your market-woman. I would not give sixpence for your signoras. One armful of good, wholesome British beauty, is worth a ship-load of their trappings, tawdry trollops. But, hark'e, baron, how much for the table? Why she must have a devilish large family, or a monstrous stomach.

Sir Will. Ay, ay, dere is her moder, la complaisante to walk in de Park, and to go to de play; two broders, deux valets, dree Spanish lap-dogs, and de monkey. 510

Load. Strip me, if I would set five shillings against the whole gang. May my partner renounce with the game in his hand, if I were you, knight, if I would not— [*Exit Bar.*]

Sir Geo. But the lady waits. [*Exit Load.*] A strange fellow this! What a whimsical jargon he talks! Not an idea abstracted from play! To say truth, I am sincerely sick of my acquaintance: but, however, I have the first people in the kingdom to keep me in countenance. Death and the dice level all distinctions.

Enter Mrs. COLE, supported by LOADER and DICK.

Mrs. Cole. Gently, gently, good Mr. Loader. 520

Load. Come along, old Moll. Why, you jade, you look as rosy this morning, I must have a smack at your muns. Here, taste her, she is as good as old hock to get you a stomach.

Mrs. Cole. Fye, Mr. Loader, I thought you had forgot me.

Load. I forget you! I would as soon forget what is trumps.

Mrs. Cole. Softly, softly, young man. There, there, mighty well. And how does your honour do? I han't seen your honour, I cann't tell the—Oh! mercy on me, there's a twinge— 530

Sir Geo. What is the matter, Mrs. Cole?

Mrs. Cole. My old disorder, the rheumatise; I han't been able to get a wink of—Oh la! what, you have been in town these two days?

Sir Geo. Since Wednesday.

535

Mrs. Cole. And never once called upon old Cole. No, no, I am worn out, thrown by and forgotten, like a tattered garment, as Mr. Squintum says. Oh, he is a dear man! But for him I had been a lost sheep; never known the comforts of the new birth; no.—There's your old friend, Kitty Carrot, at home still. What, shall we see you this evening? I have kept the green room for you ever since I heard you were in town.

Load. What shall we take a snap at old Molls. Hey, beldam, have you a good batch of Burgundy abroach?

Mrs. Cole. Bright as a ruby; and for flavour! You know the colonel—He and Jenny Cummins drank three flasks, hand to fist, last night.

Load. What, and bilk thee of thy share.

549

Mrs. Cole. Ah, don't mention it, Mr. Loader. No, that's all over with me. The time has been, when I could have earn'd thirty shillings a day by my own drinking, and the next morning was neither sick nor sorry: But now, O laud, a thimbleful turns me topsy-turvy.

Load. Poor old girl!

Mrs. Cole. Ay, I have done with these idle vanities; my thoughts are fixed upon a better place. What, I suppose, Mr. Loader, you will be for your old friend the black-ey'd girl from Rosemary-lane. Ha, ha! well, 'tis a merry little tit. A thousand pities she's such a reprobate!—But she'll mend; her time is not come: all shall have their call, as Mr. Squintum says, sooner or later; regeneration is not the work of a day. No, no, no—Oh!

563

Sir Geo. Not worse I hope.

Mrs. Cole. Rack, rack, gnaw, gnaw, never easy, a bed or up, all's one. Pray, honest friend, have you any clary, or mint-water in the house?

Dick. A case of French drams.

Mrs. Cole. Heaven defend me! I would not touch a dram for the world. 570

Sir Geo. They are but cordials, *Mrs. Cole.* Fetch 'em, you blockhead. [*Exit Dick.*]

Mrs. Cole. Ay, I am a going; a wasting and a wasting, *Sir George.* What will become of the house when I am gone, Heaven knows.—No.—When people are missed, then they are mourned. Sixteen years have I lived in the Garden, comfortably and creditably; and, though I say it, could have got bail any hour of the day: reputable tradesmen, *Sir George,* neighbours, *Mr. Loader* knows; no knock-me-down doings in my house. A set of regular, sedate, sober customers. No rioters. Sixteen did I say—Ay, eighteen years I have paid scot and lot in the parish of *St. Paul's*, and during the whole time no body have said, *Mrs. Cole,* why do you do so? Unless twice that I was before *Sir Thomas de Val*, and three times in the round-house. 585

Sir Geo. Nay, don't weep, *Mrs. Cole.*

Load. May I lose deal, with an honour at bottom, if old *Moll* does not bring tears into my eyes.

Mrs. Cole. However, it is a comfort after all, to think one has past through the world with credit and character. Ay, a good name, as *Mr. Squintum* says, is better than a gallipot of ointment.

Enter Dick, with a dram.

Load. Come, haste, *Dick,* haste; sorrow is dry. Here, *Moll,* shall I fill thee a bumper? 594

Mrs. Cole. Hold, hold, *Mr. Loader!* Heaven help you, I

could as soon swallow the Thames. Only a sip, to keep the gout out of my stomach.

Load. Why then, here's to thee.—Levant me, but it is supernaculum.—Speak when you have enough. 599

Mrs. Cole. I won't trouble you for the glass; my hands do so tremble and shake, I shall but spill the good creature.

Load. Well pulled. But now to business. Pr'ythee, Moll, did not I see a tight young wench in a linen gown, knock at your door this morning?

Mrs. Cole. Ay; a young thing from the country.

Load. Could we not get a peep at her this evening?

Mrs. Cole. Impossible! She is engaged to Sir Timothy Trotter. I have taken earnest for her these three months.

Load. Pho, what signifies such a fellow as that! Tip him an old trader, and give her to the knight. 610

Mrs. Cole. Tip him an old trader!—Mercy on us, where do you expect to go when you die, Mr. Loader?

Load. Crop me, but this Squintum has turned her brains.

Sir Geo. Nay, Mr. Loader, I think the gentleman has wrought a most happy reformation.

Mrs. Cole. Oh, it was a wonderful work. There had I been tossing in a sea of sin, without rudder or compass. And had not the good gentleman piloted me into the harbour of grace, I must have struck against the rocks of reprobation, and have been quite swallowed up in the whirlpool of despair. He was the precious instrument of my spiritual sprinkling.—But however, Sir George, if your mind be set upon a young country thing, to-morrow night I believe I can furnish you.

Load. As how? 625

Mrs. Cole. I have advertised this morning, in the register-office, for servants under seventeen; and ten to one but I light on something that will do.

Load. Pillory me, but it has a face.

Mrs. Cole. Truly, consistently with my conscience, I would do any thing for your honour. 631

Sir Geo. Right, Mrs. Cole, never lose sight of that monitor. But pray how long has this heavenly change been wrought in you?

Mrs. Cole. Ever since my last visitation of the gout. Upon my first fit, seven years ago, I began to have my doubts, and my waverings; but I was lost in a labyrinth, and no body to shew me the road. One time, I thought of dying a Roman, which is truly a comfortable communion enough for one of us: but it would not do. 640

Sir Geo. Why not?

Mrs. Cole. I went one summer over to Boulogne to repent; and, would you believe it, the bare-footed, bald-pate beggars would not give me absolution, without I quitted my business——Did you ever hear of such a set of scabby——Besides, I could not bear their barbarity. Would you believe it, Mr. Loader, they lock up for their lives, in a nunnery, the prettiest, sweetest, tender, young things!——Oh, six of them, for a season, would finish my business here, and then I should have nothing to do, but to think of hereafter.

Load. Brand me, what a country! 651

Sir Geo. Oh, scandalous!

Mrs. Cole. O no, it would not do. So, in my last illness, I was wished to Mr. Squintum, who stept in with his saving grace, got me with the new birth, and I became, as you see, regenerate, and another creature.

Enter Dick.

Dick. Mr. Transfer, sir, has sent to know if your honour be at home.

Sir Geo. Mrs. Cole, I am mortified to part with you. But business, you know— 660

Mrs. Cole. True, Sir George, Mr. Loader, your arm—
Gently, oh, oh!

Sir Geo. Would you take another thimbleful, Mrs. Cole?

Mrs. Cole. Not a drop—I shall see you this evening?

Sir Geo. Depend upon me.

Mrs. Cole. To-morrow I hope to suit you.—We are to have, at the tabernacle, an occasional hymn, with a thanksgiving sermon for my recovery. After which, I shall call at the register-office, and see what goods my advertisement has brought in. 670

Sir Geo. Extremely obliged to you, Mrs. Cole.

Mrs. Cole. Or if that should not do, I have a tid bit at home, will suit your stomach. Never brushed by a beard. Well, heaven bless you—Softly, have a care, Mr. Loader—Richard, you may as well give me the bottle into the chair, for fear I should be taken ill on the road. Gently—so, so!

[*Exeunt Mrs. Cole and Loader.*]

Sir Geo. Dick, shew Mr. Transfer in—Ha, ha, what a hodge podge! How the jade has jumbled together the carnal and the spiritual; with what ease she reconciles her new birth to her old calling!—No wonder these preachers have plenty of proselytes, whilst they have the address so comfortably to blend the hitherto jarring interests of the two worlds. 682

Enter Loader.

Load. Well, knight, I have hous'd her; but they want you within, sir.

Sir Geo. I'll go to them immediately. [*Exeunt severally.*]

ACT II. SCENE I.

Enter DICK, introducing TRANSFER.

Dick.

MY master will come to you presently.

Enter Sir GEORGE.

Sir Geo. Mr. Transfer, your servant.

Trans. Your honour's very humble. I thought to have found Mr. Loader here.

Sir Geo. He will return immediately. Well, Mr. Transfer—but take a chair—you have had a long walk. Mr. Loader, I presume, opened to you the urgency of my business. 8

Trans. Ay, ay, the general cry, money, money! I don't know, for my part, where all the money is flown to. Formerly a note, with a tolerable endorsement, was as current as cash. If your uncle Richard now would join in this security—

Sir Geo. Impossible.

Trans. Ay, like enough. I wish you were of age.

Sir Geo. So do I. But as that will be considered in the premium—

Trans. True, true—I see you understand business—And what sum does your honour lack at present?

Sir Geo. Lack!—how much have you brought? 20

Trans. Who, I? dear me! none.

Sir Geo. Zounds, none!

Trans. Lack-a-day, none to be had, I think. All the morning have I been upon the hunt. There, Ephraim Barebones, the tallow-chandler, in Thames-street, used to be a

never-failing chap ; not a guinea to be got there. Then I tottered away to Nebuchadnezzar Zebulon, in the Old Jewry, but it happened to be Saturday ; and they never touch on the Sabbath, you know.

Sir Geo. Why what the devil can I do ?

30

Trans. Good me, I did not know your honour had been so pressed.

Sir Geo. My honour prest ! Yes, my honour is not only prest, but ruined, unless I can raise money to redeem it. That blockhead Loader, to depend upon this old doating—

Trans. Well, well, now I declare, I am quite sorry to see your honour in such a taking.

Sir Geo. Damn your sorrow.

Trans. But come, don't be cast down : Though money is not to be had, money's worth may, and that's the same thing.

41

Sir Geo. How, dear Transfer ?

Trans. Why I have, at my warehouse in the city, ten casks of whale-blubber, a large cargo of Dantzick dowlas, with a curious sortment of Birmingham hafts, and Witney blankets for exportation.

Sir Geo. Hey !

Trans. And——stay, stay——then, again, at my country-house, the bottom of Gray's-inn-lane, there's a hundred tun of fine old hay, only damaged a little last winter for want of thatching ; with forty loads of flint stones.

51

Sir Geo. Well.

Trans. Your honour may have all these for a reasonable profit, and convert them into cash.

Sir Geo. Blubber and blankets ! Why, you old rascal, do you banter me ?

Trans. Who, I ? O law, marry heaven forbid.

Sir Geo. Get out of my——you stuttering scoundrel.

Trans. If your honour would but hear me—— 59

Sir Geo. Troop, I say, unless you have a mind to go a shorter way than you came. [*Exit Trans.*] And yet there is something so uncommonly ridiculous in his proposal, that, were my mind more at ease——

Enter LOADER.

So, sir, you have recommended me to a fine fellow.

Load. What's the matter?

Sir Geo. He can't supply me with a shilling! and wants, besides, to make me a dealer in dowlas.

Load. Ay, and a very good commodity too. People that are upon ways and means must not be nice, knight.—A pretty piece of work you have made here! thrown up the cards with the game in your hands. 71

Sir Geo. Why, pr'ythee, of what use would his——

Load. Use! of every use. Procure you the spankers, my boy. I have a broker that, in a twinkling, shall take off your bargain.

Sir Geo. Indeed!

Load. Indeed! ay, indeed. You sit down to hazard, and not know the chances! I'll call him back.—Holo, Transfer.—A pretty, little, busy, bustling—You may travel miles, before you will meet with his match. If there is one pound in the city he will get it. He creeps like a ferret into their bags, and makes the yellow boys bolt again. 82

Enter TRANSFER.

Come hither, little Transfer; what, man, our minor was a little too hasty; he did not understand trap; knows nothing of the game, my dear.

Trans. What I said was to serve Sir George; as he seemed——

Load. I told him so ; well, well, we will take thy commodities, were they as many more. But try, pr'ythee, if thou couldst not procure us some of the ready, for present spending. 91

Trans. Let me consider.

Load. Ay, do ; come, shuffle thy brains ; never fear the baronet. To let a lord of lands want shiners : 'tis a shame.

Trans. I do recollect, in this quarter of the town, an old friend that used to do things in this way.

Load. Who ?

Trans. Statute, the scrivener.

Load. Slam me, but he has nicked the chance.

Trans. A hard man, master Loader ! 100

Sir Geo. No matter.

Trans. His demands are exorbitant.

Sir Geo. That is no fault of ours.

Load. Well said, knight !

Trans. But, to save time, I had better mention his terms.

Load. Unnecessary.

Trans. Five *per cent.* legal interest.

Sir Geo. He shall have it.

Trans. Ten the premium.

Sir Geo. No more words. 110

Trans. Then, as you are not of age, five more for ensuring your life.

Load. We will give it.

Trans. As for what he will demand for the risque——

Sir Geo. He shall be satisfied.

Trans. You pay the attorney.

Sir Geo. Amply, amply. Loader, dispatch him.

Load. There, there, little Transfer ; now every thing is settled. All things shall be complied with, reasonable or unreasonable. What, our principal is a man of honour.

[Exit Trans.] Hey, my knight, this is doing business.—
This pinch is a sure card.

122

Re-enter TRANSFER.

Trans. I had forgot one thing. I am not the principal; you pay the brokerage.

Load. Ay, ay; and a handsome present into the bargain, never fear.

Trans. Enough, enough.

Load. Hark'e, 'Transfer, we'll take the Birmingham hafts and Witney wares.

Trans. They shall be forthcoming.—You would not have the hay, with the flints?

131

Load. Every pebble of 'em. The magistrates of the baronet's borough are infirm and gouty. He shall deal them as new pavement. [Exit Trans.] So, that's settled. I believe, knight, I can lend you a helping hand as to the last article. I know some traders that will truck; fellows with finery. Not commodities of such clumsy conveyance as old Transfer's.

Sir Geo. You are obliging.

139

Load. I'll do it, boy; and get you, into the bargain, a bonny auctioneer, that shall dispose of 'em all in a crack.

[Exit.

Enter DICK.

Dick. Your uncle, sir, has been waiting some time.

Sir Geo. He comes in a luck hour. Shew him in. [Exit Dick.] Now for a lecture. My situation sha'n't sink my spirits, however. Here comes the musty trader, running over with remonstrances. I must banter the cit.

Enter RICHARD WEALTHY.

R. Weal. So, sir, what, I suppose this is a spice of your foreign breeding, to let your uncle kick his heels in your

hall, whilst your presence-chamber is crouded with pimps, bawds, and gamesters. 150

Sir Geo. Oh, a proof of my respect, dear nuncle. Would it have been decent now, nuncle, to have introduced you into such company?

R. Weal. Wonderfully considerate! Well, young man, and what do you think will be the end of all this? Here I have received, by the last mail, a quire of your draughts from abroad. I see you are determined our neighbours should taste of your magnificence.

Sir Geo. Yes, I think I did some credit to my country.

R. Weal. And how are these to be paid? 160

Sir Geo. That I submit to you, dear nuncle.

R. Weal. From me:—Not a souse to keep you from the counter.

Sir Geo. Why then let the scoundrels stay. It is their duty. I have other demands, debts of honour, which must be discharged.

R. Weal. Here's a diabolical distinction! Here's a prostitution of words!—Honour! 'Sdeath, that rascal who has picked your pocket shall have his crime gilded with the most sacred distinction, and his plunder punctually paid, whilst the industrious mechanic, who ministers to your very wants, shall have his debt delayed, and his demand treated as insolent. 173

Sir Geo. Oh! a truce to this thread-bare trumpery, dear nuncle.

R. Weal. I confess my folly; but make yourself easy, you wont be troubled with many more of my visits. I own I was weak enough to design a short expostulation with you; but as we in the city know the true value of time, I shall take care not to squander away any more of it upon you.

Sir Geo. A prudent resolution. 181

R. Weal. One commission, however, I can't dispense

with myself from executing.—It was agreed between your father and me, that as he had but one son and I one daughter—

Sir Geo. Your gettings should be added to his estate, and my cousin Margery and I squat down together in the comfortable state of matrimony.

R. Weal. Puppy! Such was our intention. Now his last will claims this contract.

Sir Geo. Dispatch, dear nuncle. 190

R. Weal. Why then, in a word, see me here demand the execution.

Sir Geo. What d'ye mean? For me to marry Margery?

R. Weal. I do.

Sir Geo. What, moi-me?

R. Weal. You, you—Your answer, ay or no.

Sir Geo. Why then, concisely and briefly, without evasion, equivocation, or further circumlocution—No.

R. Weal. I am glad of it.

Sir Geo. So am I. 200

R. Weal. But pray, if it would not be too great a favour, what objections can you have to my daughter? Not that I want to remove 'em, but merely out of curiosity, what objections?

Sir Geo. None. I neither know her, have seen her, enquired after, or ever intend it.

R. Weal. What, perhaps I am the stumbling-block?

Sir Geo. You have hit it.

R. Weal. Ay, now we come to the point. Well, and pray—— 210

Sir Geo. Why, it is not so much a dislike to your person, though that is exceptionable enough, but your profession, dear nuncle, is an insuperable obstacle.

R. Weal. Good lack! And what harm has that done, pray?

Sir Geo. Done! So stained, polluted, and tainted the whole mass of your blood, thrown such a blot on your 'scutcheon, as ten regular successions can hardly efface.

R. Weal. The duce!

219

Sir Geo. And could you now, consistently with your duty, as a faithful guardian, recommend my union with the daughter of a trader?

R. Weal. Why, indeed, I ask pardon; I am afraid I did not weigh the matter as maturely as I ought.

Sir Geo. Oh, a horrid, barbarous scheme!

R. Weal. But then I thought her having the honour to partake of the same flesh and blood with yourself, might prove, in some measure, a kind of fullers-earth, to scour out the dirty spots contracted by commerce.

Sir Geo. Impossible!

230

R. Weal. Besides, here it has been the practice even of peers.

Sir Geo. Don't mention the unnatural intercourse!—Thank heaven, Mr. Richard Wealthy, my education has been in another country, where I have been too well instructed in the value of nobility, to think of intermixing it with the offspring of a Bourgeois. Why, what apology could I make to my children for giving them such a mother?

R. Weal. I did not think of that. Then I must despair, I am afraid.

240

Sir Geo. I can afford but little hopes. Though, upon recollection—is the Grissette pretty?

R. Weal. A parent may be partial. She is thought so.

Sir Geo. *Ab la jolie petite Bourgeoise!* Poor girl, I sincerely pity her. And, I suppose, to procure her emersion from the mercantile mud, no consideration would be spared.

R. Weal. Why, to be sure, for such an honour, one would strain a point.

Sir Geo. Why then, not totally to destroy your hopes, I do recollect an edict in favour of Brittany; that when a man of distinction engages in commerce, his nobility is suffered to sleep. 252

R. Weal. Indeed!

Sir Geo. And, upon his quitting the contagious connection, he is permitted to resume his rank.

R. Weal. That's fortunate.

Sir Geo. So, nuncle Richard, if you will sell out of the stocks, shut up your counting-house, and quit St. Mary Ax for Grosvenor-square——

R. Weal. What then? 260

Sir Geo. Why, when your rank has had time to rouse itself, for I think your nobility, nuncle, has had a pretty long nap, if the girl's person is pleasing, and the purchase-money is adequate to the honour, I may in time be prevailed upon to restore her to the right of her family.

R. Weal. Amazing condescension!

Sir Geo. Good-nature is my foible. But, upon my soul, I would not have gone so far for any body else.

R. Weal. I can contain no longer. Hear me, spendthrift, prodigal, do you know, that in ten days your whole revenue won't purchase you a feather to adorn your empty head?

Sir Geo. Hey-day, what's the matter now? 272

R. Weal. And that you derive every acre of your boasted patrimony from your great uncle, a soap-boiler!

Sir Geo. Infamous aspersion!

R. Weal. It was his bags, the fruits of his honest industry, that preserved your lazy, beggarly nobility. His wealth repaired your tottering hall, from the ruins of which even the rats had run.

Sir Geo. Better our name had perished! Insupportable! soap-boiling, uncle! 281

R. Weal. Traduce a trader in a country of commerce! It is treason against the community; and, for your punishment, I would have you restored to the sordid condition from whence we drew you, and, like your predecessors the Picts, stript, painted, and fed upon hips, haws, and blackberries.

Sir Geo. A truce, dear haberdasher. 288

R. Weal. One pleasure I have, that to this goal you are upon the gallop: but have a care, the sword hangs but by a thread. When next we meet, know me for the master of your fate. [Exit.

Sir Geo. Insolent mechanic! But that his Burgois blood ould have soiled my sword——

Enter Sir WILLIAM and LOADER.

Sir Will. What is de matter?

Sir Geo. A fellow here, upon the credit of a little affinity, has dared to upbraid me with being sprung from a soap-boiler.

Sir Will. Vat, you from the boiler of soap!

Sir Geo. Me. 300

Sir Will. Aha, begar, dat is anoder ting——And harka you, mister monsieur, ha——how dare a you have d'afrontary——

Sir Geo. How!

Sir Will. De impertinence to sit down play wid me?

Sir Geo. What is this?

Sir Will. A beggarly Bourgois vis-a-vis a baron of twenty descents.

Load. But baron——

Sir Will. Bygar, I am almost ashamed to win of such a low, dirty——Give me my monies, and let me never see your face. 312

Load. Why but, baron, you mistake this thing. I know the old buck this fellow prates about.

Sir Will. May be.

Load. Pigeon me, as true a gentleman as the grand signior. He was, indeed, a good-natured, obliging, friendly fellow: and being a great judge of soap, tar, and train-oil, he used to have it home to his house, and sell it to his acquaintance for ready money, to serve them.

Sir Will. Was dat all?

321

Load. Upon my honour.

Sir Will. Oh, dat, dat is anoder ting. Bygar I was afraid he was negotiant.

Load. Nothing like it.

Enter DICK.

Dick. A gentleman to enquire for Mr. Loader.

Load. I come.——A pretty son of a bitch this baron! pimps for the man, picks his pocket, and then wants to kick him out of company, because his uncle was an oilman.

[*Exit.*

Sir Will. I beg pardon, chevalier, I was mistake. 330

Sir Geo. Oh, don't mention it; had the slam been fact, your behaviour was natural enough.

Enter LOADER.

Load. Mr. Smirk, the auctioneer.

Sir Geo. Shew him in, by all means. [*Exit Loader.*

Sir Will. You have affair.

Sir Geo. If you'll walk into the next room, they will be finished in five minutes.

Enter LOADER, with SHIFT as SMIRK.

Load. Here, master Smirk, this is the gentleman.——

Hark'e, knight, did I not tell you, old Moll was your mark? Here she has brought a pretty piece of man's meat already; as sweet as a nosegay, and as ripe as a cherry, you rogue. Dispatch him, mean time we'll manage the girl. [Exit.

Smirk. You are the principal. 343

Sir Geo. Even so. I have, Mr. Smirk, some things of a considerable value, which I want to dispose of immediately.

Smirk. You have?

Sir Geo. Could you assist me?

Smirk. Doubtless.

Sir Geo. But directly?

Smirk. We have an auction at twelve. I'll add your cargo to the catalogue. 351

Sir Geo. Can that be done?

Smirk. Every day's practice: it is for the credit of the sale. Last week, amongst the valuable effects of a gentleman going abroad, I sold a choice collection of china, with a curious service of plate; though the real party was never master of above two Delft dishes, and a dozen of pewter, in all his life. 358

Sir Geo. Very artificial. But this must be concealed.

Smirk. Bury'd here. Oh, many an aigrette and solitaire have I sold, to discharge a lady's play-debt. But then we must know the parties; otherwise it might be knock'd down to the husband himself. Ha, ha—Hey-ho?

Sir Geo. True. Upon my word, your profession requires parts.

Smirk. Nobody's more. Did you ever hear, Sir George, what first brought me into the business?

Sir Geo. Never. 368

Smirk. Quite an accident, as I may say. You must have known my predecessor, Mr. Prig, the greatest man in the world in his way, ay, or that ever was, or ever will be;

quite a jewel of a man; he would touch you up a lot; there was no resisting him. He would force you to bid, whether you would or no. I shall never be his equal.

Sir Geo. You are modest, Mr. Smirk. 375

Smirk. No, no, but his shadow. Far be it from me to vie with great men. But, as I was saying, my predecessor, Mr. Prig, was to have a sale as it might be on a Saturday. On Friday at noon, I shall never forget the day, he was suddenly seized with a violent cholic. He sent for me to his bed-side, squeezed me by the hand: Dear Smirk, said he, what an accident! You know what is to-morrow; the greatest shew this season; prints, pictures, bronzes, butterflies, medals, and minionettes; all the world will be there; Lady Dy Joss. Mrs. Nankyn, the Dutchess of Dupe, and every body at all: you see my state, it will be impossible for me to mount. What can I do?—It was not for me, you know, to advise that great man.

Sir Geo. No, no. 389

Smirk. At last, looking wishfully at me, Smirk, says he, d'you love me?—Mr. Prig, can you doubt it?—I'll put it to the test, says he; supply my place to-morrow.——I, eager to shew my love, rashly and rapidly replied, I will.

Sir Geo. That was bold.

Smirk. Absolute madness. But I had gone too far to recede. Then the point was, to prepare for the awful occasion. The first want that occurred to me was a wig; but this was too material an article to depend on my own judgment. I resolved to consult my friends. I told them the affair—You hear, gentlemen, what has happened; Mr. Prig, one of the greatest men in his way the world ever saw, or ever will, quite a jewel of a man, taken with a violent fit of the cholic; to-morrow, the greatest shew this season; prints, pictures, bronzes, butterflies, medals, and minio-

nettes; every body in the world to be there; Lady Dy Joss, Mrs. Nankyn, Dutchess of Dupe, and all mankind; it being impossible he should mount, I have consented to sell.—They star'd—It is true, gentlemen. Now I should be glad to have your opinions as to a wig. They were divided: some recommended a tye, others a bag: one mentioned a bob, but were soon over-ruled. Now, for my part, I own, I rather inclined to the bag; but, to avoid the imputation of rashness, I resolved to take Mrs. Smirk's judgment, my wife; a dear good woman, fine in figure, high in taste, a superior genius, and knows old china like a nabob.

Sir Geo. What was her decision?

416

Smirk. I told her the case—My dear, you know what has happened. My good friend, Mr. Prig, the greatest man in the world, in his way, that ever was, or ever will be, quite a jewel of a man, a violent fit of the cholic—the greatest shew this season, to-morrow, pictures, and every thing in the world; all the world will be there: now, as it is impossible he should, I mount in his stead. You know the importance of a wig; I have asked my friends—some recommended a tye, others a bag—what is your opinion? Why, to deal freely, Mr. Smirk, says she, a tye for your round, regular, smiling face would be rather too formal, and a bag too boyish, deficient in dignity for the solemn occasion; were I worthy to advise, you should wear a something between both.—I'll be hang'd if you don't mean a major. I jump't at the hint, and a major it was.

431

Sir Geo. So, that was fixt.

Smirk. Finally. But next day, when I came to mount the rostrum, then was the trial. My limbs shook, and my tongue trembled. The first lot was a chamber-utensil, in Chelsea china, of the pea-green pattern. It occasioned a great laugh, but I got through it. Her grace, indeed, gave me

great encouragement. I overheard her whisper to lady Dy, Upon my word, Mr. Smirk does it very well. Very well, indeed, Mr. Smirk, addressing herself to me. I made an acknowledging bow to her grace, as in duty bound. But one flower flounced involuntarily from me that day, as I may say. I remember, Dr. Trifle called it enthusiastic, and pronounced it a presage of my future greatness.

Sir Geo. What was that?

445

Smirk. Why, sir, the lot was a Guido; a single figure, a marvellous fine performance; well preserved, and highly finished. It stuck at five and forty; I, charmed with the picture, and piqued at the people, A going for five and forty, no body more than five and forty?—Pray, ladies and gentlemen, look at this piece, quite flesh and blood, and only wants a touch from the torch of Prometheus, to start from the canvass and fall a bidding. A general plaudit ensued, I bowed, and in three minutes knock'd it down at sixty-three, ten.

455

Sir Geo. That was a stroke at least equal to your master.

Smirk. O dear me! You did not know the great man, alike in every thing. He had as much to say upon a ribbon as a Raphael. His manner was inimitably fine. I remember they took him off at the playhouse, some time ago; pleasant, but wrong. Public characters should not be sported with—They are sacred——But we lose time.

Sir Geo. Oh, in the lobby, on the table, you will find the particulars.

464

Smirk. We shall see you. There will be a world of company. I shall please you. But the great nicety of our art is the eye. Mark how mine skims round the room. Some bidders are shy, and only advance with a nod; but I nail them. One, two, three, four, five. You will be surprized—Ha, ha, ha!—heigh ho!

[Exit.]

ACT III. SCENE 1.

Enter Sir GEORGE, and LOADER.

Sir George.

A most infernal run. Let's see, [*Pulls out a card.*] Loader a thousand, the baron two, Tally—Enough to beggar a banker. Every shilling of Transfer's supply exhausted! nor will even the sale of my moveables prove sufficient to discharge my debts. Death and the devil! In what a complication of calamities has a few days plunged me! And no resource!

7

Load. Knight, here's old Moll come to wait on you; she has brought the tid-bit I spoke of. Shall I bid her send her in?

Sir Geo. Pray do.

[*Exit Loader.*]

Enter Mrs. COLE, and LUCY.

Mrs. Cole. Come along, Lucy, You bashful baggage, I thought I had silenced your scruples. Don't you remember what Mr. Squintum said? A woman's not worth saving, that won't be guilty of a swinging sin; for then they have matter to repent upon. Here, your honour, I leave her to your management. She is young, tender, and timid; does not know what is for her own good: but your honour will soon teach her. I would willingly stay, but I must not lose the lecture.

[*Exit.*]

Sir Geo. Upon my credit, a fine figure! Awkward—Cann't produce her publicly as mine; but she will do for private amusement—Will you be seated, miss?—Dumb! quite a picture! she too wants a touch of the Promethean torch—Will you be so kind, ma'am, to walk from your frame and take a chair?—Come, pr'ythee, why so coy? Nay, I

am not very adroit in the custom of this country. I suppose I must conduct you——Come, miss.

Lucy. O, sir.

Sir Geo. Child!

Lucy. If you have any humanity, spare me. 30

Sir Geo. In tears! what can this mean? Artifice. A project to raise the price, I suppose. Look'e, my dear, you may save this piece of pathetic for another occasion. It won't do with me; I am no novice——So, child, a truce to your tragedy, I beg.

Lucy. Indeed you wrong me, sir; indeed you do.

Sir Geo. Wrong you! how came you here, and for what purpose?

Lucy. A shameful one, I know it all, and yet believe me, sir, I am innocent. 40

Sir Geo. Oh, I don't question that. Your pious patroness is a proof of your innocence.

Lucy. What can I say to gain your credit? And yet, sir, strong as appearances are against me, by all that's holy, you see me here, a poor, distrest, involuntary victim.

Sir Geo. Her style's above the common class; her tears are real.—Rise, child.—How the poor creature trembles!

Lucy. Say then I am safe.

Sir Geo. Fear nothing.

Lucy. May Heaven reward you. I cannot. 50

Sir Geo. Pr'ythee, child, collect yourself, and help me to unravel this mystery. You came hither willingly? There was no force?

Lucy. None.

Sir Geo. You know Mrs. Cole.

Lucy. Too well.

Sir Geo. How came you then to trust her?

Lucy. Mine, sir, is a tedious, melancholy tale.

Sir Geo. And artless too?

Lucy. As innocence.

60

Sir Geo. Give it me.

Lucy. It will tire you.

Sir Geo. Not if it be true. Be just, and you will find me generous.

Lucy. On that, sir, I rely'd in venturing hither.

Sir Geo. You did me justice. Trust me with all your story. If you deserve, depend upon my protection.

Lucy. Some months ago, sir, I was considered as the joint heiress of a respectable, wealthy merchant; dear to my friends, happy in my prospects, and my father's favourite.

Sir Geo. His name.

71

Lucy. There you must pardon me. Unkind and cruel though he has been to me, let me discharge the duty of a daughter, suffer in silence, nor bring reproach on him who gave me being.

Sir Geo. I applaud your piety.

Lucy. At this happy period, my father, judging an addition of wealth must bring an increase of happiness, resolved to unite me with a man, sordid in his mind, brutal in his manners, and riches his only recommendation. My refusal of this ill-suited match, though mildly given, enflamed my father's temper, naturally choleric, alienated his affections, and banished me his house, distrest and destitute.

Sir Geo. Would no friend receive you?

84

Lucy. Alas, how few are friends to the unfortunate! Besides, I knew, sir, such a step would be considered by my father, as an appeal from his justice. I therefore retired to a remote corner of the town, trusting, as my only advocate, to the tender calls of nature, in his cool, reflecting hours.

Sir Geo. How came you to know this woman?

90

Lucy. Accident plac'd me in a house, the mistress of which professed the same principles with my infamous conductress. There, as enthusiasm is the child of melancholy, I caught the

infection. A constant attendance on their assemblies procured me the acquaintance of this woman, whose extraordinary zeal and devotion first drew my attention and confidence. I trusted her with my story, and in return, received the warmest invitation to take the protection of her house. This I unfortunately accepted.

Sir Geo. Unfortunately indeed !

100

Lucy. By the decency of appearances, I was some time imposed upon. But an accident, which you will excuse my repeating, revealed all the horror of my situation. I will not trouble you with a recital of all the arts used to seduce me : happily they hitherto have failed. But this morning I was acquainted with my destiny ; and no other election left me, but immediate compliance, or a jail. In this desperate condition, you cannot wonder, sir, at my choosing rather to rely on the generosity of a gentleman, than the humanity of a creature insensible to pity, and void of every virtue. 110

Sir Geo. The event shall justify your choice. You have my faith and honour for your security. For though I can't boast of my own goodness, yet I have an honest feeling for afflicted virtue ; and, however unfashionable, a spirit that dares afford it protection. Give me your hand. As soon as I have dispatched some pressing business here, I will lodge you in an asylum, sacred to the distresses of your sex ; where indigent beauty is guarded from temptations, and deluded innocence rescued from infamy. [Exeunt.

Enter SHIFT.

Shift. Zooks, I have toiled like a horse ; quite tired, by Jupiter. And what shall I get for my pains ? The old fellow here talks of making me easy for life. Easy ! and what does he mean by easy ? He'll make me an exciseman, I suppose, and so with an ink-horn at my button-hole, and a

taper switch in my hand, I shall run about gauging of beer-barrels. No, that will never do. This lad here is no fool. Foppish, indeed. He does not want parts, no, nor principles neither. I overheard his scene with the girl. I think I may trust him. I have a great mind to venture it. It is a shame to have him duped by this old don. It must not be, I'll in and unfold—Ha !—Egad, I have a thought too, which, if my heir apparent can execute, I shall still lie concealed, and perhaps be rewarded on both sides. 133

I have it—'tis engender'd, piping hot,

And now, Sir Knight, I'll match you with a plot. [Exit.

Enter Sir WILLIAM and RICHARD WEALTHY.

R. Weal. Well, I suppose, by this time you are satisfied what a scoundrel you have brought into the world, and are ready to finish your foolery.

Sir Will. Got to the catastrophe, good brother.

R. Weal. Let us have it over then. 140

Sir Will. I have already alarmed all his tradesmen. I suppose we shall soon have him here, with a legion of bailiffs and constables.—Oh, you have my will about you?

R. Weal. Yes, yes.

Sir Will. It is almost time to produce it, or read him the clause that relates to his rejecting your daughter. That will do his business. But they come. I must return to my character.

Enter SHIFT.

Shift. Sir, sir, we are all in the wrong box: our scheme is blown up; your son has detected Loader and Tally, and is playing the very devil within. 151

Sir Will. Oh, the bunglers!

Shift. Now for it, youngster.

Enter Sir GEORGE, driving in LOADER and another.

Sir Geo. Rascals, robbers, that, like the locust, mark the road you have taken, by the ruin and desolation you leave behind you.

Load. Sir George!

Sir Geo. And can youth, however cautious, be guarded against such deep-laid, complicated villany? Where are the rest of your diabolical crew? your auctioneer, usurer, and — O, sir, are you here? — I am glad you have not escaped us, however. 162

Sir Will. What de devil is de matter?

Sir Geo. Your birth, which I believe an imposition, preserves you, however, from the discipline those rogues have received. A baron, a nobleman, a sharper! O shame! It is enough to banish all confidence from the world. On whose faith can we rely, when those, whose honour is held as sacred as an oath, unmindful of their dignity, descend to rival pick-pockets in their infamous arts. What are these [*Pulls out dice.*] pretty implements? The fruits of your leisure hours! They are dexterously done. You have a fine mechanical turn. — Dick, secure the door. 173

Mrs. COLE, speaking as entering.

Mrs. Cole. Here I am, at last. Well, and how is your honour, and the little gentlewoman? — Bless me! what is the matter here?

Sir Geo. I am, madam, treating your friends with a cold collation, and you are opportunely come for your share. — The little gentlewoman is safe, and in much better hands than you designed her. Abominable hypocrite! who, tottering under the load of irreverent age and infamous diseases, inflexibly proceed in the practice of every vice, im-

piously prostituting the most sacred institutions to the most infernal purposes.

Mrs. Cole. I hope your honour——

183

Sir Geo. Take her away. As you have been singular in your penitence, you ought to be distinguished in your penance; which, I promise you, shall be most publicly and plentifully bestowed.

[*Exit Mrs. Cole.*

Enter Dick.

Dick. The constables, sir.

190

Sir Geo. Let them come in, that I may consign these gentlemen to their care. [*To Sir Will.*] Your letters of nobility you will produce in a court of justice. Though, if I read you right, you are one of those indigent, itinerant nobles of your own creation, which our reputation for hospitality draws hither in shoals, to the shame of our understanding, the impairing of our fortunes, and, when you are trusted, the betraying of our designs. Officers, do your duty.

Sir Will. Why, don't you know me?

200

Sir Geo. Just as I guessed. An impostor. He has recovered the free use of his tongue already.

Sir Will. Nay, but George.

Sir Geo. Insolent familiarity! away with him.

Sir Will. Hold, hold a moment. Brother Richard, set this matter to rights.

R. Weal. Don't you know him?

Sir Geo. Know him! The very question is an affront.

R. Weal. Nay, I don't wonder at it. 'Tis your father, you fool.

210

Sir Geo. My father! Impossible!

Sir Will. That may be, but 'tis true.

Sir Geo. My father alive! Thus let me greet the blessing.

Sir Will. Alive ! ay, and I believe I sha'n't be in a hurry to die again.

Sir Geo. But, dear sir, the report of your death—and this disguise—to what—

Sir Will. Don't ask any questions. Your uncle will tell you all. For my part, I am sick of the scheme. 219

R. Weal. I told you what would come of your politics.

Sir Will. You did so. But if it had not been for those clumsy scoundrels, the plot was as good a plot—O, George ! such discoveries I have to make.—Within I'll unravel the whole.

Sir Geo. Perhaps, sir, I may match 'em.

Shift. Sir.

[Pulls him by the sleeve.

Sir Geo. Never fear. It is impossible, gentlemen, to determine your fate, till this matter is more fully explained ; till when, keep 'em in safe custody.—Do you know them, sir ? 230

Sir Will. Yes, but that's more than they did me. I can cancel your debts there, and, I believe, prevail on those gentlemen to refund too—But you have been a sad profligate young dog, George.

Sir Geo. I can't boast of my goodness, sir, but I think I could produce you a proof, that I am not so totally destitute of—

Sir Will. Ay ! Why then pr'ythee do.

Sir Geo. I have, sir, this day, resisted a temptation, that greater pretenders to morality might have yielded to. But I will trust myself no longer, and must crave your interposition and protection. 242

Sir Will. To what ?

Sir Geo. I will attend you with the explanation in an instant. [Exit.

Sir Will. Pr'ythee, Shift, what does he mean ?

Shift. I believe I can guess.

Sir Will. Let us have it.

248

Shift. I suppose the affair I overheard just now; a prodigious fine elegant girl, faith, that, discarded by her family, for refusing to marry her grandfather, fell into the hands of the venerable lady you saw, who being the kind caterer for your son's amusements, brought her hither for a purpose obvious enough. But the young gentleman, touched with her story, truth, and tears, was converted from the spoiler of her honour to the protector of her innocence.

Sir Will. Look'e there, brother, did not I tell you that George was not so bad at the bottom!

R. Weal. This does indeed atone for half the——But they are here.

260

Enter Sir GEORGE and LUCY.

Sir Geo. Fear nothing, madam, you may safely rely on the——

Lucy. My father!

R. Weal. Lucy!

Lucy. O, sir, can you forgive your poor, distress, unhappy girl? You can scarce guess how hardly I've been used, since my banishment from your paternal roof. Want, pining want, anguish, and shame, have been my constant partners.

Sir Will. Brother!

270

Sir Geo. Sir!

Lucy. Father!

R. Weal. Rise, child, 'tis I must ask thee forgiveness.——Canst thou forget the woes I've made thee suffer? Come to my arms once more, thou darling of my age.——What mischief had my rashness nearly compleated. Nephew, I scarce can thank you as I ought, but——

Sir Geo. I am richly paid in being the happy instrument—
Yet, might I urge a wish——

R. Weal. Name it. 280

Sir Geo. That you would forgive my follies of to-day ;
and, as I have been providentially the occasional guardian of your daughter's honour, that you would bestow on me that right for life.

R. Weal. That must depend on Lucy ; her will, not mine, shall now direct her choice.—What says your father ?

Sir Will. Me ! Oh, I'll shew you in an instant. Give me your hands. There, children, now you are joined, and the devil take him that wishes to part you.

Sir Geo. I thank you for us both. 290

R. Weal. Happiness attend you.

Sir Will. Now, brother, I hope you will allow me to be a good plotter. All this was brought to bear by my means.

Shift. With my assistance, I hope you'll own, sir.

Sir Will. That's true, honest Shift, and thou shalt be richly rewarded ; nay, George shall be your friend too.—
This Shift is an ingenious fellow, let me tell you, son.

Sir Geo. I am no stranger to his abilities, sir. But, if you please, we will retire. The various struggles of this fair sufferer, require the soothing softness of a sister's love.—
And now, sir, I hope your fears for me are over ; for had I not this motive to restrain my follies, yet I now know the town too well ever to be its bubble, and will take care to preserve, at least, 304

*Some more estate, and principles, and wit,
Than brokers, bawds, and gamesters shall think fit.*

SHIFT, addressing himself to Sir GEORGE.

*And what becomes of your poor servant Shift?
Your father talks of lending me a lift——
A great man's promise, when his turn is serv'd!
Cajons on promises would soon be starv'd:*

310

*No, on myself alone I'll now rely:
'Gad I've a thriving traffic in my eye——
Near the mad mansions of Moorfields I'll band;
Friends, fathers, mothers, sisters, sons, and all,
Shut up your shops, and listen to my call.
With labour, toil, all second means dispense,
And live a rent-charge upon Providence.
Prick up your ears; a story now I'll tell,
Which once a widow and her child befel,
I know the mother, and her daughter, well:
Poor, it is true, they were; but never wanted,
For whatsoe'er they ask'd was always granted:
One fatal day the matron's truth was try'd,
She wanted meat and drink, and fairly cry'd.*

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[Child.] *Mother, you cry!* [Moth.] *Oh, child, I've got
no bread.*

[Child.] *What matters that? Why, Providence an't dead!
With reason good, this truth the child might say,
For there came in at noon, that very day,
Bread, greens, potatoes, and a leg of mutton,
A better sure a table ne'er was put on:*

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*Ay, that might be, ye cry, with those poor souls;
But we ne'er had a rasher for the coals.
And a'ye deserve it? How d'ye spend your days?
In pastimes, prodigality, and plays!*

*Let's go see Foote! ah, Foote's a precious limb!
 Old Nick will soon a foot-ball make of him!
 For foremost rows in side-boxes you shove,
 Think you to meet with side-boxes above?
 Where giggling girls and powder'd fops may sit?
 No, you will all be cramm'd into the pit,
 And croud the house for Sa an's benefit.
 Oh, what, you snivel? Well, do so no more,
 Drop, to atone, your money at the door,
 And, if I please—I'll give it to the poor.*

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THE END.

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